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## THE SENSE OF DANGER AND THE FEAR OF DEATH.<sup>1</sup>

A SENSE of danger, or some primitive equivalent for it, is, and always has been, a necessity of conscious life. We can trace its beginnings in the most lowly creatures; we can follow its evolution through all the phases of animal consciousness; we can imagine how important, how vital a function it fulfilled in the gregarious life of savage men; and now, under a veneer of latter-day culture and often obscured by a halo of modern piety, we still discover it as one of the most constant and characteristic elements in human consciousness. In all studies of the natural history of consciousness we read of the instinct for life, the strenuous avoidance of injury and death, as fundamental,—the first, the basal instinct upon which the reproductive and all other modes of consciousness and activities are built. And, if we analyse this instinct for life, it is clear that some method of warning, a sensitiveness to danger, is as essential as a method of escape. The fear of death is one of the emotional forms in which we express this instinct. No matter how it may be modified by convictions relative to the life beyond—the dread of torment, the hope of bliss—and although an educated self-control brushes the instinct aside so that most men do not care, and would as soon face death as life, yet the fear of death is in the blood and in the bones of men and for a moment at least will out,—a startled shrinking from the cold, solitary, disintegrating grave; a sudden terror when, for the first time, the pain of some fatal disease intimates that the end has begun; a suppliant

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<sup>1</sup> A "St. Andrews" Lecture delivered in Edinburgh.

private cry for a little longer, a reluctance to part with life, a desperate and perhaps defiant refusal to give in when Death is stealthily drawing closer his pickets.

That instinct not to die, the frightening aspect of death, is bound up with a general sense, a sense of danger. I therefore do not propose, as some apparently have imagined, to discuss how to feel and think in contemplation of one's latter-end. I couple the general and particular aspect in one title and propose to discuss fearfulness as a mode of consciousness,—to illustrate some of its phases so as, if possible, to suggest how to bring all disturbances of equanimity within one general conception; and, in particular, to indicate its evolution, its teleology (that is, the social uses of fear), and lastly its treatment,—some hint of the mental therapeutic likely to combat such disturbances. From all of which you may gather that I conceive of alarm as having physical origin and a physical explanation, that I regard anxious-mindedness as of the same nature, physiologically, as brute terror and that I set myself the task of indicating how fearfulness, as a constitutional tendency, sometimes abated, sometimes perverted, sometimes exaggerated, must play a very important part in spiritual life and ought to be understood and controlled. Such a programme covers a large ground, and I can only hope to remark upon the various aspects of the subject lightly and cursorily, yet, I trust, with sufficient amplitude to make clear my whole meaning.

If you touch a worm which has wriggled half way out of its bed,—after brine has been poured upon turf, for instance,—it will immediately and rapidly retreat so that it is almost impossible to pick it up; a snail, drowsing lazily in the warm shade, draws in his horns with quick alarm at the slightest touch; untamed reptiles recoil like a mainspring from human contact; a similar experience occasions something like a fit in fishes, even in the domesticated variety in glass-bowls; cattle, sheep, and horses, until they are accustomed to handling, shrink and shiver, and, if convenient, run away when you would stroke them; birds, scariest perhaps of all the land species, are horrified at the slightest approach to caressing. Taking these facts at their simplest, we have to note here

what we call an immediate reaction, the spring of muscles directly let loose by the stimulus applied,—almost as simple a process as the loosing of a shaft from the bow. We may not call the worm anxious-minded; it is simply prepared on the slightest occasion to wriggle. And, mark you, that simple and direct response—protective in its nature—occurs in man also. Most people if suddenly, though however slightly, touched when not prepared, recoil,—an immediate reflex activity. From so primitive a reaction we might trace step by step the evolution of the elaborate processes which underlie fear. I have selected the reaction to touch as the simplest. To understand the more complex nervous states, you must in the first place multiply the possibilities of stimulation and then, as explaining the intensity of fear, limit the possibilities of reaction.

Consider the first for a moment, and note that in all the highly organised forms of life alarm may be occasioned by messages received through any one of several avenues of sense. Untamed herbivora and birds offer the best illustration,—a herd of deer, for example, or a flock of crows. To them, new forms of contact of a gross kind are a rare experience; but I would suggest that these creatures have a skin-sensitiveness that we cannot appreciate,—that the feel of the atmosphere stimulates them in appropriate fashion. Over and above that, however, note the exquisitely sensitive organs of sight, smell, and hearing; crows perhaps specialising in sight, deer in the sense of smell. The nervous condition is such that we may certainly describe deer or crows as constantly on the *qui vive*, and the physiological account of their alarm is simply that the sensory tracts from the external organs inwards to the central ganglia are acutely active. In human life we have to some extent evolved away from that purely sensory hyper-activity. As men, in camp and village, learned the art of specialisation, and evolved the idea of sentinels and scouts—a function not unknown in the lower animals—those in the inside had no need for this acuteness of sense-perception, and their capacity for fear grew into relation with another group of functions,—the functions associated with ideas. They learned meanings; they read the signs of the

times, more indirectly, more critically; they learned the news of the camp or village, and often enough with alarm. Far off on the hillside a man runs fast towards the camp,—panting, gesticulating, shouting, incoherently; old and young turn out to hear his tidings, some are sent to meet him and hurry back with what he has to tell. The enemy are on the borders, it seems. Well, but who are they? How many are there? What is their plan? And how many are there of us? How are we prepared? Fear thus comes into relation with facts and ideas instead of being simply occasioned by alarming impressions or sensory stimuli. And so we have the development of the fearful imagination,—a sense of danger aroused by pure fancy. Night terrors, for example, are usually of this nature. You will recall the description in Job: “In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me and trembling which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof; a form was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God, shall a man be more pure than his maker?” The process is the same only wider in such emotional states as in the shrinking worm and in the frightened deer—an intense activity in the inner mechanisms of sense, reflected outwards to the muscles in trembling and restlessness and a readiness, were it convenient, to bolt.

And that brings me to the second factor in the physiology of fear—the limitation of the outward reaction. Frighten a crow and it croaks and flies, alarm a deer and it snorts and gallops; but the human mind, a consciousness doomed to offices and back parlors, unprovided with wings, linked to stiff limbs and scant breath, has no such outlet. The startling activity that courses along the sensory nerves of a man or a woman who is afraid simply circulates until it is spent, unless the mind hits upon some device, however inane, that seems to promise safety. This is apart from the fact that fear, in its simple forms, has a definite gymnastic—rigidity, then trembling, then relaxation of many of the muscles, dilated pupils, pallor, erect hair, dryness of the mouth, and other symp-

toms. These are simply reflex effects; you will find an easy account of them in Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions*. The fact that they are so constant is corroborative of my present point that fear has an organised, constitutional basis. But these effects are quite inadequate from the spiritual point of view; they do not constitute a line of conduct appropriate to the occasion. When disaster threatens, it is worse than irrelevant that your hair stands on end and that you cannot swallow. I repeat that an essential factor in fear is the limitation of proper conduct. As I have elsewhere and repeatedly remarked, pain—and fear is a form of pain—is the result of a nervous state in which there is not an outward activity equivalent to the internal activity of the moment. That, however, is by the way. What I wish to enjoin is that we are all so constituted as to have a definite and organised mechanism of alarm—a system of nerves and blood—which implies a capacity for fear that besets us from the cradle to the grave. The mode of consciousness is the same, and the physiology of it is the same, in the child who awakes in screaming terror by night, in the youth who breaks into a cold sweat at the bidding of his conscience, in the man whose knees collapse at the thought of his liabilities. In all such states there is an over-activity of impressions and a limitation of voluntary modes of expression. Impressibility, in certain circumstances, painfully in excess of appropriate response, is part of our organic heritage.

In this connection it is convenient to point out in passing that this capacity for fear is, as we might expect, more likely to become active under certain physical conditions. I shall not dwell on this point, for you must all be aware of an increased tendency to suspicion and apprehension in certain abnormal states. External factors may favor it; see how darkness aggravates fear; so do certain climatic conditions, in particular that atmospheric condition popularly described when we say that the air is surcharged with electricity; the rare atmosphere of high altitudes may increase fear—probably by its effect on the heart. Disturbances of the heart's action from whatever cause very commonly induce anxious-mindedness; so also do disturbed sleep, faulty digestion, anæmia, and

allied disorders of the blood. Any condition in short which interferes with the proper nutrition of the nervous system induces, as you are aware, that excess of sensibility popularly recognised as "nerves." Certain bad habits of mind also predispose to fear; perversions of the imagination for instance, that habit of unbridled day-dreaming which afflicts idle minds, and, in particular, indulgences which goad the conscience. And the condition is determined also, at critical periods of life incidental to development and involution—in early childhood, especially up to about the seventh year when the sensory organs are rapidly maturing; during adolescence; at that strange period—critical in the lives of many men as well as of women—towards the end of mature life, which ushers in the calmness of advanced years; and particularly in the critical months of maternity. These are times when people must expect to be beset by useless fears. It would be an interesting and quaint study to collect and analyse the various grounds that are found for fearfulness at such times; for the mind, vaguely apprehensive, disturbed by nervous processes which it does not recognise as of subjective origin, reaches out to find a cause for fear in irrelevant facts—the prevalence of cancer, the national debt, the unpardonable sin, insolvency, the yellow danger, or even the lack of an effective parliamentary opposition.

But let us now revert to the natural history of this mode of consciousness as a prelude to some remarks on its teleology—the uses of fear in the spiritual economy. And, let us beware lest, in reviewing facts of animal life, we interpret them too freely and ascribe to the creatures whose conduct we study a state of mind that probably does not exist; for we are particularly liable to that fallacy when we discuss the origin of emotions of which fear is one. A great many creatures of all species appear to be very timid, and especially those, as we might expect, that have not strong weapons of offence. That brings me at once to a contrast which I wish to emphasise—the contrast between offensive and defensive creatures. That is a contrast which is quite arbitrary, and I beg of you not to think of it as a classification. It is not a classification because the qualities in question are not distinctive. All animals are defensive.

I only wish you to observe the fact, quite rough and approximate, that some creatures are on their defence most of the time, and that others are distinctively aggressive. For example, it is obvious that the common housefly is a timid and fugitive creature compared with the audacious and predatory midge. As far away as insects, then, we can perhaps distinguish between a mode of consciousness which signifies a habitual readiness to attack and another which signifies a habitual readiness to escape. If insects have a self-consciousness—if they are capable of regarding themselves as in relation to an environment—which, for my part, I very gravely doubt—then some of them are trying, much of the time, to catch something and others are trying not to be caught.

We might—if time permitted—follow up this line throughout many classes and species of the animal kingdom. Among reptiles, for instance, contrast the armed and predatory crocodiles and alligators, the python, the boa-constrictor, the cobra, with the comparatively defenceless and fugitive turtle and tortoise, and the harmless lizards and snakes; the amphibia—frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders,—are nearly all timid, waking to seek for food for the most part at night; among fishes, contrast sharks and sword-fish, perch and stickle-backs, with the inoffensive cod and salmon, haddock and trout; and, among birds, the aggressive eagle, hawk, owl, and bat, with the defenceless doves, crows, seagulls, and sparrows. In these instances surely a difference in habit implies a difference in consciousness—a predatory instinct linked to weapons of offence, a fugitive instinct predominating in varieties not similarly armed. It is among mammals, however, that the contrast is most striking and most cognate to our theme. Roughly speaking, the carnivora—the flesh-eating mammals,—furnish us with the best examples of the aggressive types, and the herbivora—the vegetarian forms—illustrate the fugitive mode of consciousness. As I have said—and caution calls for repetition—the whole subject is a matter for conjecture; yet it were strange if, with such diversity of structure and of habit, there was not a corresponding difference in consciousness—between the warlike panther and the watchful an-



telope, the tiger and the heifer, the wolf and the sheep, the weasel and the rabbit.

Through all nature then, the fitness by which the species survive is, in some cases, a power of offence associated with a character that includes courage, audacity, ferocity, readiness to attack, and in others, and, I think, the vast majority, a physical defencelessness, associated with caution, timidity, constant watchfulness, and a readiness to escape. To us, to the human consciousness, these diversities have descended. There are men and women amongst us not unfitly described by the slang that designates them as sharks, people who are always on the pounce, some of them aggressive in manner, many of them bland and sly, yet none the less predatory, bent upon turning everything and everybody to advantage, whose outlook on the world is as a place wherein to acquire property, place, and power, and who regard every neighbor as fair game. And there are others in hosts who are mostly afraid—unassuming persons both in manner and character, whose chief desire they share with the rabbit—just to be left alone, and who suggest, in their suspicion and anxiety, the apparent state of mind of the coy and prudish cow. These are not mere resemblances, not unmeaning analogies: they are identical qualities determined by the same kind of blood and nerves, evidence of functions, structures and instincts which have been evolved in the hard struggle for existence and have been transmitted to us from the loins of the brute creation as surely as our eyes, our lungs, our hearts.

If you have doubt of this organic heritage, let your mind wander back in what vividness of retrospect your fancy can muster, to the primeval life of man, when in forest and in jungle, on bare and open hillsides, and on unprotected shores, he battled for his life and for the wife and children whom he loved with the fierce passion of a beast. How thrilling is the idea if you succeed in thinking yourself back into such a life! Or, is it rather unpleasant? So far as fear of bodily hurt is concerned, you can arrange yourselves now into the predatory and the fugitive. I wonder how many men in the room would rejoice in that forest life—to hunt and be hunted,

to scan every blade of grass, the twigs and soil so as to learn where the prey lurks that you want for dinner, yet all the while alert and alive to every sign that warns you of attack. And, ladies, how many of you would rejoice in such a life—clad in undressed deer-skins, hidden away in some sequestered cave, or perched perhaps for hours in the safe fork of a forest tree, grinding the flint of your husband's battle-axe or trimming his primitive arrows? Would you like occasionally to sally forth with him on his hunting expeditions, to carry his weapons and help home with the spoil, and sometimes, if you were good, to be allowed yourself to spring a shaft at the wild turkey, or even, it may be, to test the axe-head you had wrought, against the grizzly bear? But let us think of that period impersonally, and whatever our views of the origin of human existence may be, we are compelled to admit that, in primeval life, men must have survived very largely because of the acuteness of their sense of danger. A stage further, and you have the tribal life—the life of the camp or village to which I have referred—and there again, though the idea of sentinels has been achieved and those inside live in comparative safety, we are bound to assume that the capacity for fear—caution, suspicion, anxiety—was a very strong feature in the primitive mind and one which has transmitted as a physical endowment, from generation to generation, from race to race, and survives by force of heredity in the consciousness of to-day.

For the qualities which man inherits and by which he has survived, do not rapidly atrophy and disappear. The cerebral structures which were providentially evolved in primitive man in order to his survival, the vital structures, the structures necessary to protect and prolong life, are deeply organised in the seed of the human race, and are, to all intents and purposes, everlasting. We shall see presently that some of them, including fear, are dwindling, but they dwindle very slowly. I have not time, though it would be instructive, to recall to you the vestiges, in the human anatomy, of the structures in vogue in prehuman times. Let me just remind you that, in the development of the human embryo, there still appear gill-slits which are the vestiges of the gills of fishes, that

the human heart is at first tubular as it is in some lower animals, that the tail persists though it has been sat upon since man was man, that, in infants, and in some adults, the moulding of the brain resembles that of more primitive mammalia more than the recognised human type. These are the subject of common knowledge; you are all familiar with the idea of vestiges—that you bear about in your bodies the stigmata of a prehuman ancestry.

But perhaps you are not so familiar with the fact that there are as many, perhaps more and more significant, vestiges of the prehistoric consciousness in your consciousness of to-day. Here we arrive upon that vast field of speculative psychology—the functions of subconsciousness. For these vestiges of which I speak make a contribution to personality which is vague and occasional, not clearly apprehended, not lending itself to analysis, not recognised by us as part of our normal or typical mental equipment. You have heard, I suppose, that some people, R. L. Stevenson for example, recognised that the brain is like a bee-hive in which a vast deal of activity that we wot not of is constantly going on and brings about results that we do not understand. The “little people,” I think Stevenson spoke of, who worked his plots out for him in the night, or sent the words which he could not by however great efforts lay hands on. You know Clark-Maxwell’s conception of demon-atoms in material things,—invisible entities that explained chemical affinity, the cohesion of matter, the galvanic arrangement and rearrangement in metals, and such like phenomena. Our brains are beset by demon-atoms, sometimes helpful, sometimes unkind. Sometimes the works are sticky, sometimes smooth, sometimes the demon-atoms go on strike, sometimes, just when we are achieving a triumph of peaceful work, they run amuck and create no end of disturbance, and nearly always, when we are asleep, they run about and play high jinks so that in the morning we discover the mischief the goblins have wrought with our memories, or, more often, the kindly offices of these brownies. These subconscious activities pertain to inherited qualities. No phase through which consciousness has evolved is wholly obliterated; each leaves an organic legacy to the race. Down through all the

ages the brain of man has been building itself up in relation to one and another kind of life, and, as his mind compassed one and another kind of idea, realised one and another form of emotion, gave itself over to one and another kind of sensation, projected itself in one and another line of conduct, the organ of consciousness wove into its fabric strands and fibres of each so that the brain and sub-consciousness of to-day are an epitome of man's history and of pre-human experience, and our personality is beset within and without by instincts which embody the traditions of all the generations.

If a figure of speech will help us to grasp the reality of the subconscious in personality, let me suggest to your imagination a royal robe of which I have heard. An Oriental robe it was whose beginning was in a prehistoric dynasty of which the hieroglyphics are undecipherable. With that pertinacity and durability so characteristic of the East, this royal garment has been handed down, not through hundreds of years, but through hundreds of generations,—generations, some of them, unconscionably long, and stale, and dreary, others short, and quick, and merry. A garment of Kings, this, and of Queens, a garment to which, as tradition prescribed, each monarch added something of quality,—a jewel of price, a patch of gold, a hem of rich embroidery,—and with each contribution a legend, worked into the imperishable fabric, told the story of the giver. Did something of the personality of these kings and queens linger in the work of their hands? If so, the robe was no dead thing, no mere covering to be lightly assumed or lightly laid aside, but a living power, a royal influence, and the wearer, all unwitting, must have taken on something of the character of the dead. It is a Princess of the royal blood perhaps, sensitive and mystical, trembling on the apprehensive verge of monarchy, who dons the robe, and as she dons it, tingles to its message. These great rubies that blaze upon its front are the souvenirs of bloody conquerors. As she fingers them idly, she is thrilled by an emotion she does not understand, for in her blood something answers to the fighting spirit they embody. Pearls are for peace. That rope has been strung by kings and queens who favored art and learning; and, as the girl's fingers stray towards them, the in-

spiration changes and her mind reverts to the purposes of the civilised scholar. Here is a gaudy hem, the legacy of an unfaithful queen, steeped in intrigue all her life until her murder ended it; and, as the maiden lifts it to examine it more closely, she learns with shame and blushes, yet not knowing what has wrought this change in her, that, deep down in her character, are mischievous possibilities, possibilities of wickedness and disgrace that will dog the footsteps of her reign. Suchlike are the suggestions which the hidden parts of the mind bring forth, and in such subtle manner are they born. Without explanation, without sufficient ground, fear may be insinuated into our consciousness, derived from instincts that our fathers knew and needed.

Yet fear, like other infirmities, has its uses,—a usefulness not only to the single life, but one also that is important to life and character in general. That is teleology. Teleology, as I understand it, gives an account of functions which looks beyond their immediate and primary uses and interprets them in the light of a general conception of the evolution in which the whole creation lives and moves. Science does an injustice to itself and makes a doubtful contribution to philosophy when it stretches a point in favor of a view of life other than its own or makes any sort of compromise with unscientific conceptions; and in attempting to give an account of purpose in nature we are particularly prone to error. But, strictly within the powers and province of science, we must recognise a general and ulterior end in life; indeed, no conception of the facts of nature is sound which does not have regard to their remote and general effects, their relation to a universal process. All through nature we must observe what in a literal sense of the adjective I would call a providential, that is, a prospective purpose in things; a purpose other than the personal and immediate one; a purpose in the lives of creatures, for instance, which reaches far beyond the personal experience of the creature and takes its place in a general process. The accounts which the physiologist and the anatomist and the naturalist give of an animal are quite incomplete and insufficient as a contribution to biology; you must go deeper and farther than the mere description of the nature and

habits of an animal and appreciate its place in the constant, the eternal purpose to which all life contributes.

The same is true of mechanisms and of functions. The uses of fear, for instance, are quite incompletely described when you show how it has saved the lives of so many worms, so many fishes, so many birds, so many mammals. The functions of fear are far beyond that; they are part of a process which is eternal, that is, stretching to an unlimited extent farther back than the mind can reach to, and farther forward; they represent a quality which persists through all creation, a character which is being perfected from one generation to another, a factor in a developing personality which is quite remote from the immediate and obvious uses of fear. We might observe, for instance, the correlative effects of the sense of danger induced in organisms other than that which is subject to fear,—the response which fear evokes in its environment. A special development of any sort begets a corresponding adaptation in all the world with which it comes into close contact. An improved sense of danger, an increased wariness, reacts at once upon the intelligence and skill to which it is opposed. The more wriggly the early worm becomes, the more skilful becomes the blackbird; increase the scariness of the frogs and fishes in the shallow pools, and forthwith comes an improvement in the skill and craftiness of the heron; improve your breed of foxhounds and the foxes that escape will be more cunning than ever and you must improve your hounds again or have surreptitious resort to the ignominious bag. These are correlated adaptations brought about in various species by the keenness of their contest and by the closeness of their relation to each other. Human life affords abundant examples of the same thing. The more daring the “enterprising burglar” becomes the more intelligent and active become the police; all law-breakers, provided their sense of danger stimulates them to more skilful efforts, make a valuable contribution to intellectual life by eliciting a correlated acuteness in magistrates and public prosecutors; make new laws—factory acts or joint stock company acts, for instance—and you promptly stimulate the sense of danger of manufacturers and company promoters, their skill in

evading the law improves, and you must draw still closer the meshes of your legal net—a remote effect of fear which must have a quite salutary consequence in the intelligence of the House of Commons.

I would remind you also that certain animals started a very good idea which primitive man adopted and which is still followed out—the idea of specialists in the sense of danger. In uncivilised times, in the life of the camp or village, men were selected whose functions of alarm were extra good—scouts and sentinels whose skill in watching allowed those within the camp to develop, with an easy mind, their domestic and social affairs. We have not entirely departed from that idea, and we might perhaps with advantage develop it farther. The clergy, for example, are specialists in the sense of danger—a kind of moral scout; for it is part of the duties of the pastor to detect in your character or in the signs of the times what is dangerous and demands a warning. Others we have, self-appointed but not to be neglected, some of them wise and some of them, whom we call alarmists, foolish. Your alarmist is a specialist in fearfulness. It might be good if we were to more explicitly recognise the functions of these gentlemen and ourselves play the part of those within the camp, pursue the even tenor of our way with an easy mind, and respond just at times to the warning voice of the watch-dogs.

There are few more interesting subjects of study for the evolutionist than to observe how structures and functions which were developed in relation to a given environment, persist long after the need which occasioned them has ceased, provided they find something in their altered circumstance to which they can become actively adapted. The process to which I refer is well illustrated in human evolution. Most of the amenities of the human consciousness are by-products of what were once vital functions. An eye for color, for instance, is but a polite variation of the common and necessary sense of vision; a palate for fine wines, an ear for music, are developments which in peaceful leisure the human mind has carefully elaborated by adaptations of vital organs. In prehuman life and in the life of uncivilised man, the protective function of

the sense of danger is very obvious. And fearfulness still has some uses of that sort, especially in warning against the beginnings of diseases. But, generally speaking, the capacity for fear in the human mind is absurdly in excess of its utility. As men evolved past that stage when danger to life was constant, fear as we have seen attached to ideas and sentiments; and then its mischievousness began, for there is no end to the possibilities of fear when linked to a vivid imagination. It is at that stage when life became comparatively safe that the by-products of fear began, and many of them are very fantastic. As death became less likely the fear of it did not rapidly dwindle, but only very slowly, and it is still dwindling only slowly. Although not much wanted, the fearful emotions have survived in relation to the higher experience. For as soon as early man made himself safe he set out to discover new things to be afraid of, new uses for the obsolete emotion; all peoples have perpetuated the practice and we to-day are still engaged in imagining and inventing things which will satisfy our appetite for suspicion and alarm.

In the religious consciousness fear has always been, and for a long time will be, an important factor. From the crude terror of the danger of the gods to the fear lest the life should put the soul at enmity with its Saviour all manner of fear-stirring ideas have occurred to devout men and women, sometimes it must be confessed with little more than an emotional result, sometimes prompting to carefulness and a new and better way. Indeed, fear was the incentive at least in the Sunday schools of the passing generation to which teachers most appealed. Our adversary, the devil as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour—the predatory habit again; and the fugitive soul, if not panic-stricken, assumes a greater watchfulness and achieves a greater skill in defeating the wiles of the evil one.

We might extend this line of inquiry indefinitely and try to appreciate, in domestic, social, and political affairs, the good and the evil of suspicion and apprehensiveness and the correlated qualities which have developed in relation to them. We can sum up the matter by saying that fear has been a very conspicuous factor



in the development of personality even when it was apparently unnecessary and irrelevant. Emotions are in the first instance nervous disturbances, and latterly a kind of goad or spur to the human consciousness. The emotion which we call fear has been very potent in stimulating the intelligence of those who were afraid and of those who were to be feared alike. But just as every stage of evolution calls for a new kind of intelligence and an improved standard of skill, so also does it demand new emotions, or at least new emotional forms. Fear is no longer suitable, it is not the form of emotion most adapted to the conditions of modern life; our consciousness demands some other source of inspiration. When all is said that can be said about the uses of fear we come to the conclusion that on the whole the sense of danger is a nuisance. Fear is out of date, an anachronism, a vestige, a superannuated and silly servant that has seen better days, has done excellent service and should now be superseded. Fear, under any circumstances, is a disadvantage and out of place. We cannot begin to know the meaning of freedom in spiritual life until we have done with it. Until men and women learn that there is nothing about which it is worth while to be anxious, until they put fear aside and look forth upon the world with equanimity and confidence, they cannot exercise a free judgment nor exert a free will.

We may, I think, conveniently review now what I have been trying to say and restate the argument in summary form.

The fear of death and other fears are part of a general sense of danger, an organised function of alarm; that function is instinctive, it is part of our organic heritage, and it is constantly represented in the nervous system by an appropriate mechanism; on occasions, often irrelevant, that mechanism becomes active, gives rise to an excess of impressions, and occasions in the mind a state of anxiety. This group of functions has its beginnings in primitive creatures in simple and immediate reactions to sense-impressions; it can be traced through the animal kingdom in more complex forms corresponding to the manifold relations and varying experience of the higher animals. The uses of fearfulness to the beasts and in uncivilised human life are obviously protective and very important.

It still persists, however, in human consciousness in these comparatively peaceful times when it is for the most part irrelevant and inconvenient, and in many people it is so strongly developed that they can be described as of an almost constantly fugitive state of mind.

I have nothing that is new or important to say on the therapeutic aspect of our subject, what a man ought to do who is unduly beset by fears. We must bear in mind that, in disordered states of health and when an unusual strain is being put upon the nervous system, the mind is almost certain to suffer emotionally, and fearfulness *will* come. It is no use advising a man to keep in good health or to avoid stresses; ill health and strain have got to be faced. But a man who knows his own mind and who commands it will expect to be anxious on occasions and he will learn to ignore his fears. He will recognise that none of the things he is afraid of really matter, that to sit under an expectation of misfortune makes life unbearable, and he will tell himself not to be a fool. I would remind you of what I said of fear as of all painful states, that it is determined by an excess of vivid impressions for which there is not an adequate activity on the expressive side of the mind. Distress occurs when there is impressional activity without a corresponding development of constructive ideas or of appropriate conduct. The more I consider that account of painful states, the more important it seems to me to be (it is not my own invention); and I wish I could enforce its practical teaching,—that a sense of well-being depends upon outward activities, upon training the mind not to dwell much in the contemplation of its own states but rather to project itself in practical activities under the guidance of large and constructive ideas. I would observe, for instance, that many fearful men and women seem not to have concentrated their attention sufficiently upon their work, have not allowed themselves to become engrossed in affairs. However hard-working they may be, many timid people are thinking nearly all the time in which they think at all upon the results of their efforts and about the effect upon themselves,—what will happen to them because of what they are doing, what their neighbors will think and say about them be-

cause of it, how much money they will gain, or how much they will lose, by it. Yet surely it is the work, the thing itself, that matters.

Ideas of the right sort go far to combat fear. In particular, it is profoundly true, and salutary and expedient to believe that there is nothing to be afraid of.

I sometimes think that, in discussing the *process* of evolution, we fail to some extent to realise the significance of it,—that by great pain, by great labor, by the endurance and death of men and women and children, and only so, things move on to a higher plane; that whatever happens to us and ours, the world is acquiring new and better methods and ideas and results. It is progress in general, improved life as a whole, that evolution achieves; and you and I have got to be made use of for it whether the experience be distressful or no. It is accordingly not worth while to be afraid; the only thing worth caring about is the purpose in which we are enveloped,—the large purpose that is being wrought in the world, the greater life that is coming into it, in the East and in the West; and men and women cease to be afraid in proportion as they fill their minds with the thought of it, realise the pettiness of their private affairs alongside of it, and bring their efforts into line with it.

I have tried, throughout this humble contribution to psychology, to be faithful to what I believe to be the teaching of biology; and, still in the light of it, I would conclude with the observation that, while in the animal kingdom success was bestowed upon those species which happened to be in the track of evolution, it was and is the prerogative of man to put himself there and to keep himself there. And though the force of circumstances or the malice of his neighbors may be too much for a good man in the sense that his life or his family's may be endangered or his affairs brought to disaster, the fact remains that peace of mind is oftenest the perquisite of the man who has set his life in harmony with what an enlightened judgment recognises as the providential end of human experience.

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